

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A video data recording/reproducing apparatus comprising:

an input device that inputs video data item to be recorded;

5 a data storage unit that stores the video data item input by the input device;

a communication unit that communicates with an external unit via a network;

10 means for moving one of a plurality of video data items stored in the data storage unit to the external unit by communication between the communication unit and the external unit, to increase a free memory space in the data storage unit;

15 means for determining whether to-be-reproduced video data item is stored in the data storage unit or in the external unit;

means for reproducing the to-be-reproduced video data item from the data storage unit, if it is determined that the to-be-reproduced video data item is stored in the data storage unit; and

25 means for executing a streaming process to reproduce a stream of the to-be-reproduced video data item that is transferred from the external unit while the stream of the to-be-reproduced video data item is being received by the communication unit, if it is determined that the to-be-reproduced video data item is

stored in the external unit.

2. The video data recording/reproducing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising means for displaying a list of recorded video data items
5 including video data item that is currently stored in the data storage unit and video data item that is moved to the external unit,

wherein the determining means includes means for determining whether to-be-reproduced video data item,
10 which is selected from the list of recorded video data items, is stored in the data storage unit or in the external unit.

3. The video data recording/reproducing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the moving means includes
15 means for detecting a size of a free memory space in the data storage unit, and means for moving, if the detected size of the free memory space decreases to less than a predetermined value, one of a plurality of video data items stored in the data storage unit to the
20 external unit by communication between the communication unit and the external unit.

4. The video data recording/reproducing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the moving means includes
means for adding identification information for
25 identifying the video data recording/reproducing apparatus to video data item that is to be moved to the external unit,

the video data recording/reproducing apparatus further comprising:

means for executing a verification process for determining whether the to-be-reproduced video data item stored in the external unit is video data item that is moved from the video data recording/reproducing apparatus, on the basis of the identification information that is added to the to-be-reproduced video data item stored in the external unit; and

means for prohibiting execution of the streaming process if it is determined that the to-be-reproduced video data item stored in the external unit is not the video data item that is moved from the video data recording/reproducing apparatus.

5. The video data recording/reproducing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

means for detecting a size of a free memory space in the data storage unit;

means for finding video data item with attributes corresponding to a specified condition for deletion, on the basis of attributes of the plurality of video data items stored in the data storage unit, if the detected size of the free memory space decreases to less than a given value; and

means for deleting the found video data item from the data storage unit,

wherein the moving means includes means for moving

one of the plurality of video data items stored in the data storage unit to the external unit by communication between the communication unit and the external unit if the video data item with attributes corresponding to
5 the specified condition for deletion is not found.

6. The video data recording/reproducing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising means for copying video data item with attributes, which correspond to a specified condition for backup, to the
10 external unit by communication between the communication unit and the external unit, on the basis of attributes of the plurality of video data items stored in the data storage unit.

7. The video data recording/reproducing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the video data item is broadcast program data, and the input device includes a receiver unit that receives the broadcast program data.
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8. The video data recording/reproducing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the data storage unit
20 includes a disk drive unit.

9. A method of managing video data stored in a data storage unit of a video data recording/reproducing apparatus, comprising:

inputting video data item to be recorded;
25 storing the input video data item in the data storage unit;
moving one of a plurality of video data items

stored in the data storage unit to an external unit via a network, to increase a free memory space in the data storage unit;

5 determining whether to-be-reproduced video data item is stored in the data storage unit or in the external unit;

10 reproducing the to-be-reproduced video data item from the data storage unit, if it is determined that the to-be-reproduced video data item is stored in the data storage unit; and

15 executing a streaming process to reproduce a stream of the to-be-reproduced video data item while the stream of the to-be-reproduced video data item is being received from the external unit, if it is determined that the to-be-reproduced video data item is stored in the external unit.

20 10. The method according to claim 9, further comprising displaying a list of recorded video data items including video data item that is currently stored in the data storage unit and video data item that is moved to the external unit,

25 wherein the determining includes determining whether to-be-reproduced video data item, which is selected from the list of recorded video data items, is stored in the data storage unit or in the external unit.

11. The method according to claim 9, wherein the

moving of the video data item includes detecting a size
of a free memory space in the data storage unit, and
moving, if the detected size of the free memory space
decreases to less than a predetermined value, one of
5 the plurality of video data items stored in the data
storage unit to the external unit by executing
communication with the external unit via the network.

12. The method according to claim 9, wherein
the moving of the video data item includes adding
10 identification information for identifying the video
data recording/reproducing apparatus to video data item
that is to be moved to the external unit,

the method further comprising:
executing a verification process for determining
15 whether the to-be-reproduced video data item stored in
the external unit is video data item that is moved from
the video data recording/reproducing apparatus, on the
basis of the identification information that is added
to the to-be-reproduced video data item stored in the
20 external unit; and

prohibiting execution of the streaming process if
it is determined that the to-be-reproduced video data
item stored in the external unit is not the video data
item that is moved from the video data recording/
25 reproducing apparatus.

13. The method according to claim 9, further
comprising:

detecting a size of a free memory space in the data storage unit;

finding video data item with attributes corresponding to a specified condition for deletion, on the basis of attributes of the plurality of video data items stored in the data storage unit, if the detected size of the free memory space decreases to less than a given value; and

10 deleting the found video data item from the data storage unit,

wherein the moving of the video data item includes moving one of the plurality of video data items stored in the data storage unit to the external unit via the network, if the video data item with attributes corresponding to the specified condition for deletion 15 is not found.

14. The method according to claim 9, further comprising copying one of the plurality of video data items stored in the data storage unit to the external unit via the network, to back up contents of the data storage unit.